

the greater part of his army there, with the view of giving the troops some experience in marching, and that they might be compelled to get rid of their useless baggage. The movement had no other military significance. While he was absent on this duty the President took the opportunity of issuing an order relieving him from the command of all the armies, and restricting him to the control of the Army of the Potomac.¹ The first information which McClellan got of this change in his position was from the newspapers, he wrote at once a very handsome letter to the President, accepting the action of the Government without remonstrance. But the conduct of Mr. Lincoln, in treating the general-in-chief of the army with such scant courtesy, is wellnigh inexplicable.*

The President, a little later, did another thing very difficult to understand, and so difficult to justify that we will not attempt the task. He took a whole division—that commanded by General Blaker—from the Army of the Potomac, and transferred it to the army in West Virginia, in command of which he had been persuaded to place General Fremont. This officer was to have another chance, and the President was importuned to give him a respectable force.²

There was no military exigency
demanding such a

See Mr. Lincoln's letter to McClellan, March 31, 1862, 5
W. R., 58,
and Stanton to Fremont, same date, 18 W. R., 34. See,
also, Lincoln
to Fremont, June 16, 1862, 15 W. R., 662, from which it
appears that Lin-
coln took Blenker's division from McClellan and gave it to
Fremont, because
the latter had promised him that with it, he would
undertake the job of
moving the railroad at or east of Knoxville, Tennessee,
C/M 15 W, R.,
I, 7; 18 W. R. 8,